



Examining the CSR Practice of Family-Friendly Workplaces in the Light of Sustainability

Anna Pátkai Bende^{a,*}, Márta Nárái^b

^aDepartment of International Studies and Communication; Doctoral School of Regional- and Business Administration Sciences, Széchenyi István University, Győr, Hungary

^bDepartment of Social Studies and Sociology, Széchenyi István University, Győr, Hungary
bende.anna@sze.hu

This paper examines corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices of organizations with „Family-Friendly Workplace” trademark certificate in Hungary. The aim of this paper is to reveal the role of family-friendly workplaces in contributing to sustainability based on the results of a questionnaire survey. The study emphasizes the essentiality of family-friendly workplaces for sustainability, as they create an environment for their employees that supports their work-life balance and thus it contributes to improving their quality of life and to creating a more livable and sustainable society. Moreover, this research highlights that these workplaces also stand out with regard to other CSR activities. 68.7 % of family-friendly organizations consciously define the priorities of their CSR activities, with around 40 % having a CSR strategy and 35.3 % having a sustainability strategy in which their commitment in the areas of CSR and sustainability is recorded. These priorities are fair business, participation in local community life, environmental protection and sustainability, equal opportunities, and responsible employment. More than 60 % of the examined workplaces support civil, non-profit organizations and local community initiatives, and more than half of them implemented various CSR-related programs in the last three years, including fundraisers, educational and work training, actions in the field of environmental protection as well as community and health promotion programs. This study concludes that with their implemented activities, family-friendly organizations in Hungary make a significant contribution to sustainability.

1. Introduction

The focus of this study is to examine family-friendly workplaces in Hungary from the perspective of corporate social responsibility (CSR). In recent years, the role of corporations in addressing and solving various ethical, social, and environmental problems has received increasing attention, both from academics and business professionals (Tahniyath and Said, 2023). The definitions associated with this concept emphasize that CSR means corporate behavior that goes beyond business actions and legal aspects, in which companies try to keep the interests of different stakeholders in mind when making decisions (Szántó, 2019) and voluntarily take social and environmental aspects into account (European Commission, 2001). In the past few years, approaches have emerged that interpret social responsibility for other actors as well. Thus, not only companies but also public institutions (Pavlyshyn et al., 2021), universities (Ali et al., 2021), and civil/non-profit organizations (Nárái and Reisinger, 2016) are involved in various forms of social responsibility. Through CSR activities, the actors contribute to achieving a more livable and sustainable society. These activities include environmental protection, human rights, equal opportunities, health and safety, business ethics, participation in tackling various social issues or promoting work-life balance (Maróco et al., 2022). In relation to the latter, there is increasing emphasis on creating family-friendly workplaces, which can be considered a form of social responsibility (Heikkinen et al., 2021)

The studies on family-friendly practices in organizations are increasing and have become an important area of research (Agrawal and Garg, 2022). Studies usually focus on the work-life balance practices that family-friendly organizations offer their employees rather than the other activities they undertake, such as supporting local communities. Implementing a family-friendly operation is in itself a crucial CSR activity, but the purpose of this study is to learn more about the further CSR practices of family-friendly organizations in Hungary. The study

builds on the results of a questionnaire survey on organizations with „Family-Friendly Workplace” trademark certificate in Hungary in 2023 and sheds light on how they contribute to sustainability. The first part of the study gives a brief overview of the connection between social responsibility and sustainability and then outlines the essence of the family-friendly concept. In the empirical part of the study, we examine the role that family-friendly certified workplaces in different sectors (business, state/local government, non-profit) can play for a more livable and sustainable society, how their social responsibility can manifest itself, and what options for action are available to them?

2. The relationship between sustainability and CSR

It is now clear that development must not only mean economic growth at any price but also social and environmental sustainability. Sustainability can only be achieved by considering economic, social, and environmental factors as a coordinated system on a long-term and global level (Jancsovszka, 2016), this is possible with an integrative approach that considers individual and community interests together (Miszlivetz and Márkus, 2014). In order to create a livable society, it is essential that the various social actors take into account the expectations and aspects of social, economic, and environmental sustainability in their activities and actively participate in solving and tackling social and environmental issues through civic engagement and commitment, both on an individual and on an organizational and institutional level. In addition to defining the concept of sustainable development, it is also important to define the principles, values, and goals associated with sustainability in order to make them more concrete and tangible for individual social actors. This helps to achieve socially responsible behavior but can also guide social responsibility by highlighting areas that require special attention or support. In this context, the Earth Charter (2000) is worth mentioning, a universal declaration that establishes fundamental principles relating to human and natural values and emphasizes interdependence and shared responsibility. In addition, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015, should also be highlighted because it defines 17 goals for sustainable development (SDGs = Sustainable Development Goals) (United Nations, 2015). The SDG goals form a global framework that covers the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development (Szennay and Szigeti, 2019). These two documents are consistent with each other. Following and implementing the principles and objectives set out in them can contribute to a “better, fairer [...] more sustainable” (Faragó, 2003) society and environment. To achieve the goals, the involvement of all social actors is required, which is also emphasized in the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, we can approach a sustainable society and its implementation from the perspective of the activities of different social actors (e.g., companies, civil/non-profit organizations, and public institutions). Companies are particularly decisive actors in this regard, for example, by integrating environmental and social aspects into their business activities and avoiding unethical practices (Wirba, 2023). As a result of increasing social and governmental pressure, companies are putting more and more emphasis on their CSR strategies. And CSR is an excellent tool for achieving sustainable development by offering a win-win strategy (Mahmud et al., 2021).

3. The family-friendly concept and family-friendly workplaces

It is worth clarifying what is meant by the family-friendly workplace concept. Balancing family life and professional responsibilities is a daily challenge for workers in developed countries today. With the increase in female employment, the two-earner family model has spread, and traditional family roles have changed (Esping-Andersen, 2017). At the same time, more and more attention is being paid to examining the relationship between family and work, and early research has already shown that the two areas of life are significantly interconnected (Allen and Martin, 2017). Today, most people have to balance work and family life, which can easily lead to tension and double role conflict in workers' lives (Safrizal et al., 2020). The problem of the double role conflict is interpreted primarily for women, although today, with the change in role expectations, we believe that reconciling professional and family roles can also become increasingly challenging for men, although family duties still primarily concern women. Striving for work-life balance is becoming more important not only for employees and their families but also for organizations and society.

There is increasing attention to creating family-friendly workplaces, which can be seen as a form of corporate social responsibility (Heikkinen et al., 2021). Family-friendly workplaces help their employees balance their work commitments with their personal lives and family roles in the most efficient way (Székely et al., 2019). The starting point for creating family-friendly organizations is a corporate culture that places employees first and in which respect for human resources plays a central role. Family-friendly organizations support their employees with a wide range of measures, ranging from the introduction of flexible working arrangements and the provision of childcare to various benefits and services related to community building, health promotion, and recreation (Pátkai Bende, 2022).

Introducing family-friendly work practices can have many positive aspects, both for workers and their families, as well as for employers and society. On the one hand, family-friendly policies can contribute to workers' work-life balance, maintain their physical and mental health, and improve their quality of life (Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard, 2014). On the other hand, they can increase employee satisfaction, loyalty, and commitment to the organization, which can be beneficial to employers alike (Arief et al., 2021). Last but not least, the successful reconciliation of work and family can lead to increased female employment and improved birth rates (Thevenon, 2011), which is extremely important from a societal and demographic point of view.

This study examines the CSR activities of family-friendly workplaces in Hungary that go beyond the implementation of family-friendly operations and highlights other ways in which family-friendly organizations contribute to economic, environmental, and social sustainability.

4. Methodology and sample characteristics

In 2023, we conducted an online questionnaire survey among organizations with a „Family-Friendly Workplace” trademark certificate in Hungary. The members of the target group of our research were certified by the Family-Friendly Hungary Centre, a non-profit organization that encourages a family-friendly attitude in Hungarian society. The trademark certificate obtained during an audit authentically proves that the owner of the trademark has a family-friendly approach and operates as a family-friendly workplace.

The main research question of this study is what activities Hungarian family-friendly workplaces engage in the field of social responsibility. In order to obtain quantifiable data about the CSR activities of the organizations involved in the study, the questionnaire method was chosen. The online questionnaire was sent to Hungarian employers with the “Family-Friendly Workplace” trademark (702 organizations in total) and completed by representatives of 116 organizations (managers, human resource managers, or human resource workers) that formed the sample for the research. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the sample by sector, form of organization, and number of employees. Almost half of the participants came from businesses, but state/municipal employers, as well as organizations from the civil/non-profit and ecclesiastical sectors, are also represented in the research. Most respondents were employers with 1-49 employees. Around a third of them were organizations with 50-249 employees, while large companies were the least depicted in the sample. In terms of their organizational form, they function primarily as corporate forms (limited liability company, joint-stock company) or budgetary bodies/public institutions, but non-profit business associations, foundations, public bodies, or even church parishes can also be found in the sample. Regarding the activities carried out, representatives from almost all areas participated in the survey, but they are most represented in the fields of arts, entertainment, and recreation (14.7 %), human health and social work (12.9 %), other services (9.5 %), manufacturing (8.6 %), wholesale and retail trade (8.6 %), public administration (8.6 %) and to the most minor extent (1-2 organizations by sector) agriculture, financial and insurance activities, real estate activities, administrative and support service activities and respondents from the electricity industry. Furthermore, the vast majority (94 %) of family-friendly employers in the sample are located in cities (43.1 % in county towns, 37.1 % in other cities, 13.8 % in the capital), and only 6 % are organizations that work in villages.

Table 1: Characteristics of the examined family-friendly organizations (n=116)

Sector (%)	Number of employees (%)		Form of organization (%)		
Economic	47.4	1-9 people	10.3	Limited liability company	33.6
State/municipal	39.7	10-49 people	36.2	Joint-stock company, closed	19.8
				joint-stock company	
Civil/non-profit	9.5	50-249 people	32.8	Budgetary body, public	30.2
				institution	
Ecclesiastical	3.4	Over 250 people	20.7	Non-profit business	6.9
				association	
				Other non-profit organization	5.2
				(e.g., foundation, association,	
				public body)	
				Other (e.g., law enforcement	4.3
				organization, parish)	

5. Results and discussion

Below are the outcomes from family-friendly organizations on the topic of social responsibility. The research shows that the vast majority of organizations surveyed (92.2 %) consider implementing family-friendly operations and introducing family-friendly practices as a social responsibility that they can use to help improve

the quality of life of their employees and their family members, to ensure their well-being or to improve the demographic indicators and thus contributing to the sustainability of society.

The majority of family-friendly workplaces (68.7 %) identify focal points of their social responsibility, with around 40 % having a CSR strategy and 35.3 % having a sustainability strategy in which their commitment in the areas of CSR and sustainability is recorded. The results show that the setting of CSR priorities is typical for economic as well as public and non-profit organizations but to a slightly greater extent for large companies. It can also be concluded that the smaller the number of employees is, the less likely it is that the organization has a sustainability or CSR strategy. The association is significant, although not very strong (Cramer'sV 0.241 and 0.251).

The key areas of CSR activities of the examined family-friendly organizations are shown in Figure 1. Based on this, it can be concluded that the most important fields of CSR activities in family-friendly workplaces are fair operations, involvement in local community life, environmental protection and sustainability, human rights, and equal opportunities as well as responsible employment. There are organizations where the latter priority appears in rehabilitation employment, i.e., in creating jobs for people with reduced working capacity and/or disabilities. There were also respondents for whom donations are the primary CSR area (see "Other" category).

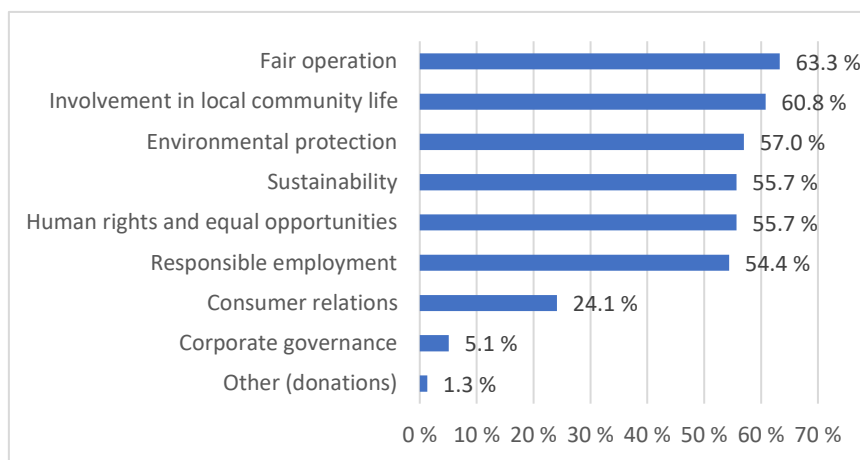


Figure 1: Main areas of CSR activities of family-friendly organizations with CSR priorities (% of respondents) (n=79)

Important indicators of a socially responsible organization can be: to have employees who deal with the organization's CSR, to make their employees aware of the importance of social responsibility, and to involve them in CSR activities. In more than 60 % (61.7 %) of the family-friendly workplaces, there are employees who deal with CSR activities; however, this activity mainly takes place in subtasks in the scope of activity, there are only a few organizations (5 respondents) where someone is employed full-time specifically dealing with CSR. Employers in the state/municipal sector and in the countryside are the least likely to have their employees deal with CSR tasks as part of their job, whereas this is most common among family-friendly employers in the capital. However, only the number of employees has a significant impact. The larger the organization is, the more CSR appears as a work task, but the extent is increasing, especially for employers with more than 250 employees. About half (47 %) of the family-friendly organizations surveyed support their employees' voluntary work and also offer a day off for their employees' activities in this regard. A fifth of the respondents organize volunteer days and charity activities among their colleagues. Employer support for volunteering is lowest in the economic sector (36.4 %) and non-profit organizations (25 %). At the same time, two-thirds of public institutions and the vast majority of civil society organizations support the charitable work of their employees. In addition, we found a significant, though not very strong (Cramer'sV 0.246) association between employment numbers and support for volunteering, with those with fewer employees favoring their employees' volunteering over large employers. More than a third (36.2 %) of family-friendly workplaces organize lectures and training courses for their employees to raise awareness of social responsibility. This is typical for the majority of ecclesiastical actors, and it is the same in the other three sectors (34.5 %-36.4 %).

One of the pillars of the CSR activities of the family-friendly workplaces involved in the research is the support of the local communities. Figure 2 shows the organizations and initiatives most commonly supported by family-friendly organizations. Civil non-profit organizations, i.e., foundations and associations, local community initiatives, and cultural and educational institutions, rank highest, but support and sponsoring in the sports sector are also decisive, while social institutions are the least beneficiaries of their CSR activities.

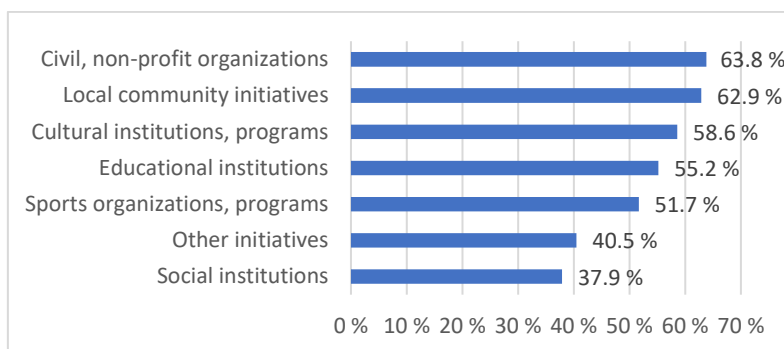


Figure 2: Local communities and organizations supported by examined family-friendly organisations (% of respondents) (n=116)

The participants of the study were also asked which CSR-related programs and actions they had implemented in the last three years. More than half (54.3 %) of the family-friendly organizations have applied various programs, usually more, which are assigned to several areas and topics. Overall, the programs and events mentioned cover a very wide range of activities and can be summarized as follows.

- **Support and donation.** It is very common in family-friendly organizations, as we have already shown that they support local civil organizations and other institutions (e.g. schools, kindergartens) either financially or in the form of donations in kind (e.g. school supplies). The importance of family is also reflected in this area, as family-friendly workplaces often organize local fundraisers for underprivileged families in need and support foundations that help large families, premature babies and sick children. In addition, some responses include raising funds for war refugees. Support also means helping: in their CSR programs, several employers mention their participation in the renovation of various facilities (e.g. kindergartens, schools) as well as their help for the elderly and people in need during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Support education and labor training programs.** Education and training programs that help disadvantaged groups in the labor market are important for family-friendly employers. Among the implemented programs we find those aimed at integrating and catching up with people with changed work abilities and disabilities in the labor market. In addition, the programs include workshops on the situation of women and female leaders, training programs for students, and several employers support the training of older people (e.g., the Infocommunications program, Senior Academy).
- **Environmental programs.** Environmental protection and environmental sustainability play an important role in the life of family-friendly organizations. Among the implemented CSR programs, waste collection is widespread, either as organizational initiatives or through participation in voluntary waste collection actions (e.g. "TeSzedd!"). Some participants of the study mentioned the organization of training lectures on sustainability and environmental protection, as well as attending conferences related to the topic. Other environmental actions include planting trees, replacing the vehicle fleet from an environmental point of view, and collecting old batteries and mobile phones.
- **Health and safety programs.** The CSR practices of family-friendly organizations also include programs to support safety, health maintenance, and prevention. Family-friendly workplaces often organize road safety events for children, sports and health days, charity runs, screening programs, or organized blood donations.
- **Community programs.** Many family-friendly employers mention organizing community programs as their CSR programs. This primarily means the organization of programs for children, large families (e.g., family day, children's day), or children's camps. Events for the elderly and people with disabilities are also popular.

6. Conclusions

This paper makes it clear that family-friendly workplaces are of the utmost importance for CSR. On the one hand, they create an environment for their employees that supports their work-life balance and thus, it contributes to improving the quality of life of employees and their families and to creating a more livable and sustainable society. On the other hand, the results highlight that family-friendly workplaces also stand out with regard to other CSR activities. 68.7 % of family-friendly organizations consciously define the priorities of their CSR activities, with around 40 % having a CSR strategy and 35.3 % having a sustainability strategy in which their commitment in the areas of CSR and sustainability is recorded. These priorities are fair business, participation in local community life, environmental protection and sustainability, human rights and equal opportunities, and responsible employment. More than 60 % of the family-friendly workplaces support civil, non-

profit organizations and local community initiatives. furthermore, more than half of them implemented CSR-related programs (e.g., fundraisers, educational and work training, community and health promotion programs, and actions in the field of environmental protection and sustainability) in the last three years. This study found that with their implemented activities, family-friendly organizations in Hungary make a significant contribution to sustainability.

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